



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

August 31, 2005

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

We write to urge you in the strongest possible terms to immediately use your authority to provide Individual Assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to the residents of Dade and Broward Counties, Florida who suffered damage because of Hurricane Katrina.

We have been verbally advised by the State of Florida, Division of Emergency Management that FEMA has denied Florida's eligibility for Individual Assistance, despite the fact that FEMA's assessment revealed 152 homes destroyed or severely damaged in Miami-Dade County and 20 in Broward County, with many more sustaining more minor damage. We further understand that one of the reasons FEMA refuses to provide assistance to individual Dade and Broward County residents is because Florida does not meet the FEMA "State Threshold" for such a declaration, which FEMA has set at 800 homes destroyed or severely damaged.

We ask you to reject these criteria and overrule the FEMA denial to ensure that every resident of Dade and Broward Counties who needs federal assistance, and is eligible for it, receives it.

We believe that the destruction, suffering and disruption of every Dade and Broward resident who FEMA itself has determined have sustained damage from Hurricane Katrina, merits the help extended to all of the hurricane's victims. Using a "State Threshold" to deny FEMA's help to individual Floridians who need it is like denying medical aid to a few hundred sick people because several hundred people aren't sick.

FEMA has authority under section 408 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §5174-5204c and Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) to provide financial assistance to eligible

necessary expenses and serious needs and are unable to meet such expenses or needs through other means.

We ask that you direct FEMA to use this authority immediately to help our residents who suffered damage from Hurricane Katrina – Florida residents who, absent FEMA's "State Threshold," would be eligible for help from their government.

Thank you for your kind attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



KENDRICK B. MEEK
Member of Congress



ALCEE L. HASTINGS
Member of Congress



DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ
Member of Congress



ROBERT WEXLER
Member of Congress